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# *Verses*

*William Grant McColley, Jr.*  
*United States Navy*  
1918



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Book A161 V4

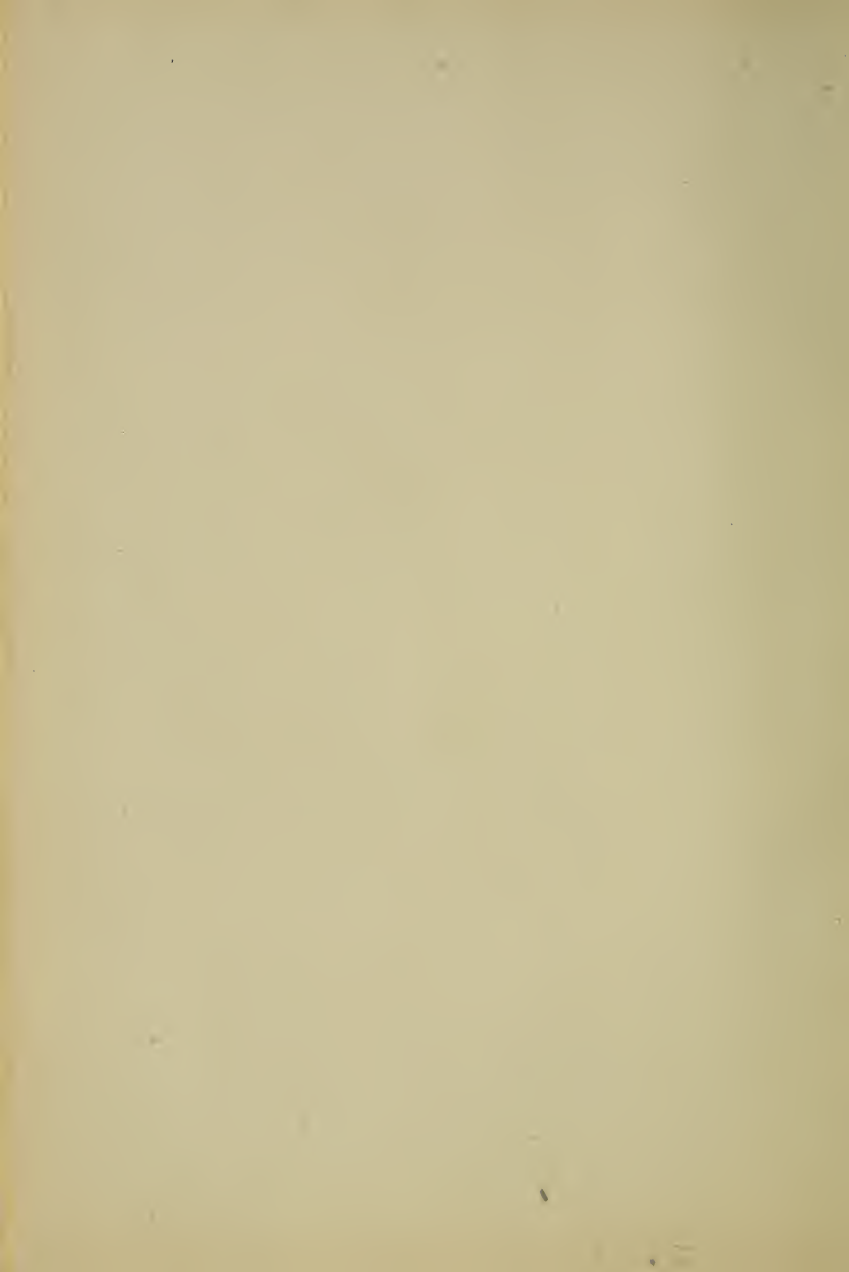
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# *Verses*

W. S. McColly Jr



WRITTEN BY WILLIAM GRANT  
McCOLLEY, JR., WHILE IN  
THE SERVICE, IN THE YEAR  
NINETEEN EIGHTEEN, AT  
THE UNITED STATES NAVAL  
TRAINING STATION, GREAT  
LAKES, ILLINOIS AND  
CAMP LOGAN, ILLINOIS

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MILWAUKEE

DEC -5 1918

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## Verses

U. F. H. Dec 10. 18.  
HAVE you known the dainty rustle of the  
elfish morning air,  
As it twinkled and it danced along the way,  
Have you felt its flitting sweetness laugh away  
each drooping care,  
'Till you whistled and you carolled all the  
day?

There is something in its music that the world  
can never know,  
For it's fleeting as the mystery of a shade,  
But your song goes up to heaven and your sigh  
goes back below,  
While you guess in happy wonder where it's  
made.

**N**O name but sweet could mark her face,  
And none but sweet her wafted grace,  
As woodlands knew her pace.

No word but fire could hold her flare,  
And none but fire her breathing hair,  
That tempted winds to dare.

No sound but strong could give her might,  
And none but strong her passioned fight,  
That made the might a right.

No days but made her mounts a mole,  
And none but what her forward goal,  
Left life a living soul.

I WOULD sing of the crags and the dim gray  
    sea  
That spread to the arc of the sky,  
Of a whimsied wind that came to me,  
    With the blush of a stolen sigh.

I would sing of the leaves and the fluttered  
    shades,  
That lay on the dark of the green,  
Of the light's last kiss in the silent glades,  
    With the glint of a golden sheen.

I would sing of the night and the twinkled stars,  
    That gleamed to the end of the blue,  
Of a sweetened voice that breathed its bars,  
    With the strains of a message true.

Do you know the croon of the silent sky,  
Of waves and the crash of the sea,  
Of the darkened winds that powered fly,  
And sands of a distant lea?

Do you know the cry of the rustled leaves,  
Of steeps and the call of the wild,  
Of the yearning droop of the yellowed sheaves,  
And warmth in the laugh of a child?

Do you know the song of the feathered folk,  
Of nests and the bark of the trees,  
Of the pulsing scream from a burdened yoke,  
And paths where a tracking flees?

Do you know the end of a strength in leash,  
Of minds and the want of a soul,  
Of the leaping fire from a quickened flesh,  
And what is a livings' goal?



COME roam with me on the leaping hills,  
Where the trees grow high to the sky,  
Where the wild life sings for the joy it brings,  
And a laugh is the end of a sigh.

Keep pace with me to the river's brink,  
Where the waves hurl might in their flight,  
Where the eddy's whirl brings a flying curl,  
And mist with a gleaming bright.

Flit on with me to the shadow's home,  
Where the dusk is made for each glade,  
Where the day's dim foe throws a dying glow,  
And sight in its sleep is laid.

WHERE the bush'd trees blow with a nod-  
ding head,  
And the clouds fly whitely and low,  
I am going soon of a whispered wind,  
And my heart has asked that you go.

Where the hills show green with a living grass,  
And the streams rush leaping to flow,  
I am going soon on a dancing float,  
And my heart has asked that you go.

Where the skies bow dim with a fading blue,  
And the sun dies red in its glow,  
I am going soon on a spreading shade,  
And my heart has asked that you go.

When the shadows grow into graying light,  
And the night steals gently and slow,  
Will you sail with me 'till the dew is laid,  
For my heart asks e'er that you go?

COME live with me on the greening,  
'Neath the clouds and the high growing  
trees,  
Where the flutter of leaves wide careening,  
Sings low as the murmuring seas.

The breeze is sweet, but your whisper  
Is sweeter than breezes could be,  
And a grassy knoll where the shadows slur,  
Lies waiting for you and for me.

Your spirit will come, that I'm knowing,  
But a spirit is less than a life,  
For the want of you ever is growing,  
And the pain turns a stone for its knife.

Will you come and the days spend together,  
By the banks of the sun-glintoned streams,  
For to me you're the bloom of the heather,  
And the gold of a million dreams?

Where the reeds march close to the water,  
There you'll find me waiting for you,  
When the sun gives the light to his daughter,  
And the stars are steadfast and true.

SLOW voices croon with a whimsied sigh,  
In the kiss of a floating breeze,  
And echoes low of the night birds cry,  
Gilds glades where the shading flees.

The waves' gray wash brings a subtle call,  
Of worlds that their eyes have known,  
And the frothings break with a gleaming fall,  
As the crests to the air are thrown.

Dim blue reigned high to the nestled stars,  
With their eyes in a limpid white,  
And the soft winds sang with their fairy bars  
'Till dreams stole the soul in flight.

SOME say 'tis the stars  
That make the night sweet,  
Some say 'tis the trees,  
Or the snows whitened feet;  
But what may be said  
Of the wide glimmered seas,  
When cloud sails move windward,  
Soft curls to appease.

WITH the stars a song I'm singing,  
Would you care to know it too,  
Ere a bell of light is ringing,  
Or the flowers damp with dew?

A song of shaded cloud trails,  
Is the song I happied sing,  
A song of shifting misted vales,  
Ere birds their offering bring.

'Tis the peaceful gongs of silence,  
A silence deep and pure,  
A silence with no where nor whence,  
Yet e'er a wound 'twill cure.

WHEN the heat of the sun has faded,  
And the leaves are fluttering shades,  
Like the dainty kiss of a slumbering miss,  
Glides the song of wakening glades.

O'er the nodding heads of the bushes,  
Flows charms of a world afar,  
With the mystic veil of a floating sail,  
And the gleam of a distant star.

It is then I would live forever,  
While memories softly play,  
'Till the once cool dusk is a gleaming husk,  
And the sun comes again with the day.

THE pink and blue of the evening,  
Turned gray with the graying clouds,  
And the softened ring where the breezes cling,  
With whispers grew softly loud.

The song was old and centuries long,  
As long as a wrinkled wave,  
But a song it was, and it did belong  
To life, and not the grave.

And while it sang, did you hear it,  
Or the crash of a monied din,  
Or sense the flit of a feathered bit,  
When its kin were welcomed in.

You live, perchance, and perchance you die,  
Yet a life is nothing to me,  
For the lights that fly from the shadow's sigh,  
Are worse than a hurtling sea.



**T**HERE'S a feel about the morning that it's  
good to be alive,  
To breathe the subtle fragrance from the winds  
that lightly drive,  
To taste the wine of falling dew  
that glistens diamond white,  
And know that shades of yesterday  
have winged eternal flight.

It is in the scented morning that the world is  
filled with song,  
With bursting heralds from a land where sprites  
and nymphs belong,  
And it's in the glowing morning  
that the red of life is high,  
When your words are those of worship  
and your altar bounds the sky.

THE birds are bickering from the leaves,  
Outside my window 'neath the eaves.

They chatter with a roughish play,  
A subtle scold for creeping day.

Soon quick away their wingings speed,  
For downy fledglings in their need.

Then back to bicker from the leaves,  
Outside my window 'neath the eaves.

DID you sense the golden kindness of the  
merry sun today,  
As it touched the burnished yellow of the  
trees;  
Did a breeze of southern fragrance steal your  
memories out to play,  
And to hunt the mystieried harbours of its  
seas?

There's a glowing in its beaming that is filled  
with warming light,  
As it glitters through the dimness of the sky,  
And the breeze that flows below it with the kiss  
of pulsing night,  
Wafts you gently where the winging spirits  
fly.

THERE are moonbeams in the forest and  
their trails of yellow light,  
Creep in and out the fallen leaves with gleams  
of checkered flight;  
The song of slowly waving trees  
comes clear with accent slow,  
As the moonbeams in the forest bathe  
their tips with golden glow.

The moonbeams of the forest have a language  
far away,  
A subtle tale of hidden skies with clouds where  
spirits play.  
And they bring their dainty memories  
from the ends of all the earth,  
For the moonbeams of the forest  
twined with romance in their birth.

**S**HALL we wander by the river where the  
stones are show gray,  
Through the rapids where the crestings  
lightly roam,  
May our footsteps tread its margin where the  
leapings whirl away,  
And the buffets turn with laughter into  
foam?

Shall we follow by its swirling  
'Till the leapings quiet lie,  
And its windings know the stillness of the  
night,  
May we breathe the subtle sweetness from  
the pools that give the sky,  
And the swing of flickered shadings in their  
flight?

WERE you a friend when your soul was  
crushed?

Then say you're a friend of the world,  
For the man that lives is the man that gives,  
And the man where the storms have swirled.

The man is dead who will hide himself,  
When he's sick of the world and its sham,  
But great is the soul that will make its goal,  
In the face of a drouth and a dam.

It is only the man who makes his way,  
Over bones and the ash of despair,  
That leaves a light for each coming flight,  
Are you dead, or afraid to dare?

HAVE you a friend who will stand by you,  
When the storm throws a blackened  
cloud,  
Who will gladly die with a hidden sigh,  
When the green turns dark in a shroud?

There are friends and friends in this dizzy world,  
And their color is ever the same,  
'Till the battle cry calls to do or die,  
Or to hide with a deadened shame.

When the fight seems lost and your bloody  
wounds,  
Turn stiff with the death to come,  
Then's the time to know where the cowards  
grow,  
And whose lips with aid are dumb.

It is harsh to say that our friends are few,  
And that life holds but for its own,  
Yet the years will tell when a touch of hell,  
Comes burning, and leaves you alone.

UPON the beach where curled waves play,  
And cast aside each surf-torn day  
Their pack of sea-tossed bones,  
A sorried group of tales doth lay,  
Dead tales of Davy Jones.

This spiked piece of salt-bound wood  
Was once a living spar,  
That held within its wide spread hood  
The stirring winds which bore it far,  
Till last it topped a jagged bar.

A bit of smashed and broken oar,  
Calls to your mind the wild sea lore,  
Whose strange tales know no bounds;  
And each of all the whitened bones  
Which knew the rocks where wild waves pour,  
Has its dead tale of Davy Jones.



“ TO MY MOTHER ”

I WOULD tell you that I love you,  
Love each graying strand of hair,  
That I made by wayward roaming,  
Through your great undying care.

Long miles may count the gulf between,  
And habit build its bonds anew,  
But Mother dear, when night awakes,  
Draw deep from stars my love of you.

My love is like these whispered lights,  
That blocked by clouds have e'er shone on,  
And Mother, know I think of you,  
Though gleamings bright from skies have  
gone.

UPON the irons,  
The woody fire,  
Glows,  
And grows.

The tiny climbing flames,  
Daring;  
From slender shafts,  
Are flashing,  
Flaring.

The embers,  
Dropping,  
Live brands popping,  
And jets from resined knots  
Go hopping,  
O'er the hearth.

**H**AVE you roamed alone 'mid a million men  
Away from the tongue they speak,  
A stranger to the sounds of earth,  
Uncertain what you seek?

Did you fare your way on the vagrant tides  
That live to ebb and flow,  
A whimsied wish of fancied winds,  
That wildly restless go?

Perchance your life and a rutted world,  
Are not of a kindred plane,  
But time will ask when leaves are brown,  
Was your trailing blazed in vain?

I WRITE of life in molded forms,  
Of faces sad and gay,  
Of struggles through a blackened night,  
And fields where children play.

One theme is strong with restless pen,  
With tales of potent fire,  
A strength that rises swift to warm,  
Or pluck a soothing lyre.

Creation is my title bold,  
The steeps that build the strong,  
The sleep that wears away the weak,  
And lands of endless song.

ALONE I roamed 'neath bleaking sky,  
Of life, save moaning trees and old gray  
stone,  
No sight nor sigh.

The cloud faint mist grew cold in rain,  
With Death I was alone,  
With Death and pain.

The World, alas, had died,  
And bones, with grating, crunching sound,  
In wierdness cried.

Loud called my wail for earth's cold lot,  
But vain, and e'er a living pain  
Forget me not.

A TALE of memories all in vain,  
A wasted tale, and breaking  
pain.

A tale of months that fled as days,  
A leaping tale, and burning rays.

A tale of weeks that hang as years,  
A sodden tale, and gnawing fears.

A tale of memories all in vain,  
A wasted tale, and breaking pain.

WHEN with a sharpened grasp of steel  
The world tears out a sweet ideal,  
Whose life has brought you joy;  
'Tis hard to shake the sickening reel,  
And hold your voice from jarring cry,  
If quivering 'neath a heavy heel,  
You've seen a shining life hope die,  
A hope that gold can't buy.

But though your aching spirit's torn,  
And gray clouds make your skies forlorn,  
Forget your earth ground rents to pine,  
From every wreck a hope is born,  
And for the garments shabbied worn,  
There'll be a cloak divine.

THERE'S a rush and a roar through the  
    swaying door,  
And the grind of the beaten steel,  
With a crashing sway like an angry bay,  
    Where the flounderers rock their keel.

The smoke curls fly with a passionate cry,  
    And the fire of a ceaseless heat,  
O'er the pound of wheels in whirling reels,  
    And the force of their hammered beat.

With the hurtled bound of a leaping  
    hound,  
The swirl of the dust speeds by,  
And the dying scream of the driven  
    steam,  
Dies faint in a silent sky.





'TWAS the boom, boom, boom of an  
angry sea,  
And the fives of a shrieking gale,  
Rolling the waves with a fiendish glee,  
'Neath the crack of a tattered sail.

The sea rolled fast, and the ship rolled high,  
And a splintered stump was her mast,  
With only a ribbon or two to fly,  
Or to catch the wind which passed.

'Mid the ocean's surge, and the ocean's crash,  
And the flick of the biting wail,  
With fingers each a bloody mash,  
The crew was fighting the flail.

A Mail was she, and her tons were great,  
And a heart was locked in her deck,  
Not to be loosed on a breakers' gate,  
Nor to die unmanned as a wreck.

So the sea fought on, and the crew fought on,  
And the two fought on together,  
For a broken bit of woody pawy,  
Lest a soul from grief might sever.

'Twas the fight they loved, and the fight they  
sought,  
And a fight they made it ever,  
Nor dead when a peaceful sea was wrought,  
But a fight that lives forever.

THROUGH wavy mists that coil and reel,  
High pointed,  
Muscled strong with steel,  
Ribboned like a spiders' lair,  
Fingers that so lightly feel,  
The pulsing air.

The living wires,  
Pour forth their speeding tales,  
Or as a net of virile lyres,  
Tap deep the fluffy sails,  
Of floating clouds.

Dim distant leagues,  
That hold what worlds would know,  
Hide nothing, though their miles  
Be numbered as the flaking snow,  
The lightening currents,  
Open wide as wind-shot sails  
Their covered trails,  
And snap them, flashing,  
Past the speeding mails.

TO float in one long endless sleep,  
Until all time has ceased to beat,  
With a dream to break the still,  
Just silence, and its music sweet.

'Tis not that I am tired of life,  
For life is rich with leaping fire,  
'Tis only that a silence calls,  
A silence calls and tunes its lyre.

I would forget the bonds of time,  
That wing with houred rise and fall,  
My mind would seek some hidden cloud,  
Where centuries pass and make no call.

TAPS, and the day is far away  
From the dregs of a living gall;  
Taps, and the end of another play,  
In the strains of a silvered call.

Taps, and a voyage to another land,  
A land where souls belong,  
Taps, and the sweet of an endless life,  
And the breath of a living song.













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